

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

S E C R E T HONG KONG 00672

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CH US
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY ARTICLE ON CHOU: POSITION ON TAIWAN

REF: (A) STATE 9722 (B) HONG KONG 456 (C) HONG KONG 466

1. SINCE THE REFERENCE TO TAIWAN DISCUSSED IN REF B WAS MADE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF CHOU EN-LAI'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO FOREIGN POLICY, WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE DEPARTMENT'S SKEPTICISM CONCERNING A POSSIBLE SIGNAL OF GREATER FLEXIBILITY. IN PARA 3 REF B WE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRC'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE INTERNAL PROBLEM OF THE "LIBERATION" OF TAIWAN AND THE INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM OVER TAIWAN BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE PRC REMAINS UNCHANGED. NEVERTHELESS, WE WERE SUGGESTING THAT THE REFERENCE TO THIS RARELY USED FORMULATION FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF THE SINO-US AMBASSADORIAL TALKS HARKED BACK TO A PERIOD WHEN THE CHINESE PROBABLY BELIEVED THEY WERE SHOWING GREAT FLEXIBILITY. IT MIGHT THEREFORE BE WORTHWHILE TO TAKE A CAREFUL LOOK AT THE CHINESE NEGOTIATING POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF NON-USE OF FORCE.

2. SINCE WE DO NOT HAVE THE COMPLETE RECORDS OF THE EARLY
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PERIOD OF THE AMBASSADORIAL TALKS IT IS DIFFICULT TO COMMENT IN DETAIL FROM HERE. WE RECALL, HOWEVER, THAT DURING THIS PERIOD THE TWO SIDES NEARLY REACHED AGREEMENT ON A BRIEF, GENERALLY WORDED DRAFT RENOUNCING THE USE OF FORCE WHICH CONTAINED A SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE TAIWAN STRAITS. THE PRC INSISTED ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE AGREEMENT REFERRED ONLY TO INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES RATHER THAN THE INTERNAL QUESTION OF THE "LIBER-

ATION" OF TAIWAN, A POSITION THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY HELD UP TO THE PRESENT. NEVERTHELESS, OUR AMBASSADOR AT THE TIME U. ALEXIS JOHNSON, CONSIDERED THAT THE DRAFT AS PROPOSED ADEQUATELY MET THE U.S. DEMANDS AND RECOMMENDED THAT WE ACCEPT IT. THE DEPARTMENT, HOWEVER, INSISTED ON INSERTING INTO THE DRAFT A REFERENCE TO THE RIGHT OF "INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE, A PHRASE THAT CLEARLY REFERRED TO THE U.S.-ROC MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY. THE CHINESE WERE ADAMANT IN THEIR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THIS PHRASE, AND THE NEGOTIATIONS ON NON-USE OFFSHORE SUBSEQUENTLY DETERIORATED INTO AN ACRIMONIOUS EXCHANGE OF CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES.

3. DEPARTMENT MAY WELL BE RIGHT THAT THE PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE WAS NOT INTENDED AS A SIGNAL, AND IF IT WAS, IT WAS A RATHER FEEBLE ONE. THE ARTICLE DOES, HOWEVER, FIT INTO A PATTERN OF SHIFTING PRC EMPHASIS TO EARLIER, MORE FLEXIBLE POLICIES, I.E. THE MAJOR ATTENTION GIVEN TO MAO'S 1956 SPEECH ON THE TEN GREAT RELATIONSHIPS. IT IS CLEAR THAT WHATEVER FLEXIBILITY MAY EXIST ON THE PRC'S PART WILL NOT EXTEND TO A PUBLIC RENUNCIATION OF THE USE OF FORCE IN "LIBERATING" TAIWAN, AND SOME HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON ALTERNATIVES SHORT OF THAT GOAL MIGHT BE USEFUL.

4. OUR REFERENCE IN REF C TO "THIS ISSUE" WAS INTENDED TO MEAN THE ENTIRE TAIWAN PROBLEM, AND WE FELT OUR MENTION OF THE CHINESE VIEW THAT "LIBERATION" IS AN INTERNAL PROBLEM MADE THIS SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR. WE REGRET THE GRAMMATICAL SLIP. WE FEEL THAT FURTHER CLARIFICATION FROM HERE WOULD UNDULY HIGH-SECRET

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LIGHT THE PEOPLE'S DAILY REFERENCE AND STIMULATE A DEBATE WHICH DEPT, WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO AVOID AT THIS TIME. UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO THE CONTRARY, THEREFORE WE PLAN NO FURTHER ACTION.
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